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TWO ESSAYS.

ON

THE SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL,

AND

ON DUELLING.

BY

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[NOT FOR PUBLICATION.]

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LONDON:
HOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

PREFACE.

Being about to leave England for India, I am requested by a few intimate friends to print, for distribution among them and such others as feel an interest both in the subject and the writer, the following Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, which I wrote many years ago; and to reprint, for the same purpose, my article on Duelling, from the seventh number of "The Westminster Review." I have obtained permission of the Editor to comply with the latter part of this request.

C. H. C.

February, 1835.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

SUBLIME AND BEAUTIFUL.

THERE are various States of the human mind, both moral and intellectual, which, when we reflect upon them, excite in us the peculiar Emotions called the Emotions of Sublimity and Beauty. The States of mind which excite the emotions of sublimity and beauty, are called, in that respect, Sublime and Beautiful.

Thus the unconquerable fortitude of the chained and tortured Prometheus, excites in the minds of those who reflect upon it the Emotion of Sublimity, and is of itself, in that respect, denominated Sublime.

The tender remembrance of his distant coun-

try, which filled the mind of Antor, as he lay expiring amid the tumult of conflicting armies,

"Dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos,"

excites in like manner the Emotion of Beauty, and receives on that account the epithet of Beautiful.

But a thunder-storm is also *Sublime*, and the dawn of a summer's day is also *Beautiful*.

How does it happen that *these* states of External Nature are described by the same epithets as *those* states of the Human Mind? or, (which is the same question viewed in another aspect,) how does it happen that these states of External Nature affect the minds which contemplate them, in the same way as those states of the Human Mind?

It will be found that certain states of external nature excite in the minds which contemplate them the emotions of sublimity and beauty, and are called sublime and beautiful, because they are associated in various ways with sublime and beautiful states of the human mind.

Many glimpses of this truth were seen by Plato and his followers. Dr. Hutcheson had a very vivid, but not a very distinct perception of it. His perception of it was not sufficiently distinct to show him that it pervades the whole subject.

Mr. Alison, and after him the author of the article "Beauty," in the Supplement to the En-

cyclopædia Britannica, first perceived that the association I have indicated explains all the cases in which the emotions of sublimity and beauty are excited by *external* objects. But the first of these distinguished writers supposes, incorrectly, as I think, that the emotions of sublimity and beauty are consequent only upon certain *trains* of ideas; and the second seems to have supposed that the emotions of sublimity and beauty are never excited except when the association I have indicated is established, neither of the elements of the association being, according to him, sufficient to produce that effect.

Both writers seem to me to have thus thrown upon their respective expositions a mist which their great ingenuity and power of illustration have been insufficient to dispel.

In this Essay I shall first point out that we are not affected by the sublimity and beauty of *states of mind*, nor by that borrowed sublimity and beauty which is attributed to *external objects*, unless we exert the faculty of Reflection. Men are affected by the greenness or smoothness of an external object, when it is merely exhibited to their senses; they are not affected by the sublimity and beauty of external objects, nor of states of mind, unless they reflect upon them.

Having pointed out the necessity of reflection, I shall proceed to examine and classify the various ways in which External Objects borrow

the sublimity and beauty which are the proper attributes of States of Mind. I shall then examine "external objects" in so far as they are invested with this borrowed sublimity and beauty, with reference to the different senses by which they are perceived; and conclude by pointing out more particularly the difference between my view of the subject and that exhibited by Mr. Alison and the author of the article "Beauty," in The Encyclopædia Britannica.

Any of those feelings which are to me the exciting causes of sublimity and beauty, may be feelings either of myself or of some other person; but in neither case can the sublimity or beauty of those feelings be perceived by me, unless I exert that faculty which is called Reflection, and by which we attend to and examine our own mental operations.

The necessity of Reflection is sufficiently obvious in the first case. In order to apprehend the qualities of a state of my own mind, it is necessary for me to reflect upon it, just as, in order to apprehend the qualities of a visible object, it is necessary to look at it. But in the second case, it might be supposed at first sight, by those not conversant with psychological inquiries, that a feeling in the mind of another man may be the direct object of contemplation; but as it is only by means of our senses that we are able to hold

any communication with other minds, and as courage, pity, love, &c. are certainly not objects of sense, it follows that all we perceive is the external symptoms of those feelings, and that when we are said to contemplate the courage or pity of another man, the real object of our thoughts is an image of those feelings in our own minds, which we can only attend to and examine by means of an act of Reflection.

The mere presence, then, of Sublime or Beautiful feelings in the mind is not of itself sufficient to ensure the perception of their sublimity and beauty; for, unless the power of reflection is exerted, there can be no such perception. Accordingly, children in whom the power of reflection is yet undeveloped, and that large portion of mankind in whose minds the exercise of that power is prevented by the constant importunity of physical wants, or by the troublesome and painful exertions by which alone they can satisfy such wants, derive scarcely any of that enjoyment which Sublime and Beautiful feelings, even when they are in other respects of a painful kind, impart to those who have both leisure and inclination to turn their attention inwards. And persons even in this latter predicament, so long as any violent passion is raging within them, are rendered incapable of exerting their power of reflection, and accordingly those very passions which, in a certain state of moderation, produce

the emotions of sublimity and beauty, such as love, pity, grief, indignation, effectually exclude those emotions from the mind so long as they fill it with tumult and agitation.

When Sublime or Beautiful feelings are not of a violent character, nothing prevents the person affected by them from perceiving and delineating their sublimity and beauty. The discontent which Rasselas felt with all the comforts and luxuries of the happy valley was a feeling of this description; and Dr. Johnson has therefore represented him, with great propriety, as uttering his observations "with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them."

A more lofty example, and one which is not fictitious, may be found at the beginning of the third book of "Paradise Lost," where Milton, surveying his own mind with perfect calmness, has expressed and illustrated with all the resources of poetry the sublime resignation with which he endured the calamity of blindness, and the seraphic visions with which he could cheer the darkness that encompassed him.

When sublime or beautiful feelings have been, originally, of a violent character, but the agitation they have created has subsided and given place

to a state of mind resembling the emotion that preceded it in every thing but its turbulence, the act of reflection may then be performed. That most graceful sentiment—"Heu quanto minus cum reliquis versari quam tui meminisse"—is evidently the production of a mind in sorrow, but in that tranquil stage of sorrow which permits the attention to be withdrawn from the calamity which is the cause, and directed to the feeling which is the effect. The impropriety of such an expression, if put into the mouth of one in the first paroxysms of grief, would be manifest to the most inexperienced critic. Sighs and tears and inarticulate exclamations are the characteristics of such a condition. When these have in some degree allayed the tumult of the mourner's feelings, he indulges himself by dwelling upon and exaggerating the merits of the friend he has lost, and by reproaching himself with some real or supposed neglect of a person to whom he owed so much; but it is not until the calm which succeeds the tempest of passion has taken possession of his soul, that he ever thinks of making reflections upon his own sorrow.

I have stated that, when we are said to contemplate the courage, pity, &c., of another, the real object of our thoughts is an image of those feelings in our own minds: but it is important to remark, that this image is frequently so modified by circumstances which operate upon our minds,

and which did not operate upon the mind of that other, that the difference between our feelings and his becomes more remarkable than their resemblance; and in some cases we do not contemplate any image of what we suppose to be passing in his mind, but, on the contrary, an image of feelings of which we believe him to be wholly unconscious. Thus, when we see a person unaware of some great calamity which has befallen him, the peculiar interest of his situation arises from his not being affected by those emotions which would affect him if he knew the truth.

The address of Danae to her infant affords a very striking specimen of this sort of beauty.

Ὦ τέκος,
Οιον ἔχω πόνον· σὺ δ' ἀωτεῖς, γαλαθηνῷ τ'
Ἠτορι κνώσσεις ἐν ἀτερπεῖ δώματι,
Χαλκεογόμφῳ δὲ, νυκτιλαμπεῖ,
Κυανέῳ τε δνόφῳ. Τὺ δ' αὐαλέαν
Ὑπερθε τεὰν κόμαν βαθεῖαν
Παριόντος κύματος οὐκ ἀλέγεις,
Οὐδ' ἀνέμου φθόγγων.

The sublimity of Lucretius's account of the gods in the Epicurean theology is of the same sort,—

Omnis enim per se Divom natura necesse 'st
Immortali ævo summâ cum pace fruatur,
Semota a nostris rebus sejunctaque longè;
Nam privata dolor omni, privata periclis,
Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri,
Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur irâ.

The object of our contemplation here is not what the gods feel, but what they do not feel.

Homer puts forth all his prodigious energy in bringing before us the furious contention of Hector and Patroclus and their followers, for the dead body of Cebriones, and then, by the rapid and eminently sublime touch with which the passage concludes, he at once converts all that has gone before into a vivid description of the unconscious condition of the fallen warrior.

Ὡς δ' Εὖρός τε Νότος τ' ἐριδαίνετον ἀλλήλοιϊν
Οὔρεος ἐν βήσσῃς βαθέην πελεμιζέμεν ὕλην,
Φηγόν τε, μελίην τε, τανύφλοιόν τε κράνειαν,
Αἵ τε πρὸς ἀλλήλας ἔβαλον τανυήκεας ὄζους
Ἠχῇ θεσπεσίῃ, πάταγος δέ τε ἀγνυμενάων·
Ὣς Τρῶες καὶ Ἀχαιοὶ ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι θορόντες
Δῄουν, οὐδ' ἕτεροι μνώοντ' ὀλοοῖο φόβοιο.
Πολλὰ δὲ Κεβριόνην ἀμφ' ὀξέα δοῦρα πεπήγει,
Ἰοί τε πτερόεντες ἀπὸ νευρῆφι θορόντες·
Πολλὰ δὲ χερμάδια μεγάλ' ἀσπίδας ἐστυφέλιξε
Μαρναμένων αμφ' αὐτόν· ὁ δ' ἐν στροφάλιγγι κονίης
Κεῖτο μέγας μεγαλωστὶ, λελασμένος ἱπποσυνάων.

Since by far the greater number of the sublime and beautiful emotions we experience in the course of our lives, are suggested to us by the effect of some external object upon the organs of our senses, it becomes of importance to examine and to classify the various ways in which this may take place. In other words, to examine and classify sensible objects, considered as the Signs of sublime and beautiful emotions.

Sensible Objects considered as the Signs of sublime or beautiful emotions, may be divided into three classes, as follow :—

Conventional Signs—Casual Signs—Signs neither casual nor conventional, which may be called Natural Signs.

This last class, which I shall examine first, and therefore designate by the No. 1, may admit of five subdivisions, thus :—

1. Sensible objects which are the effects of Sublime or Beautiful feelings.

2. Sensible objects which resemble or are analogous to those last mentioned.

3. Sensible objects which are the causes of Sublime and Beautiful feelings.

4. Sensible objects which resemble or are analogous to those last mentioned.

5. Sensible objects which resemble, or are analogous to Sublime and Beautiful feelings.

CLASS I.—NATURAL SIGNS.

Subdivision I.—Sensible Objects which are the Effects of Sublime or Beautiful Feelings.

There is, perhaps, no violent emotion to which the human constitution is subject, that does not exhibit itself to the eye or the ear of the by-standers, by the effects which it produces on the body.

The inflamed countenance, the glaring eye, the harsh and violent gestures, the strained and

discordant voice of anger;—the relaxed and drooping form, the tearful eye and low note of sorrow, are known universally and recognised immediately. If, having seen persons in these conditions, we wished to inform another what we had seen, we should naturally say, I have seen a man in violent anger, I have seen a woman in profound grief. We should not think it necessary to enumerate the various signs from which we had inferred the existence of those mental states.

If the anger thus indicated be sublime, we call the countenance, and tone and gestures which indicate it, sublime. If the sorrow be beautiful, we call the attitude and voice which make its existence known to us, beautiful; but in doing so, we use the terms "sublime" and "beautiful" not literally but figuratively, just as we call the gestures of the man, angry gestures, the attitude of the woman, a mournful attitude.

These effects are transient and last but a very short time after their causes have ceased to operate, but there are others of a more enduring character, which constitute the materials of rational physiognomy. In the opinion of many our minds produce no such lasting effects upon our bodies, and the appearances I speak of ought, according to them, to be classed, not among effects, but among some other species of the signs of feelings. I think, however, that it is not dif-

ficult to explain according to acknowledged principles how such effects may be produced. There is no physiological fact more certain than that our muscles when they are frequently exerted, increase in bulk, and, as the increase is always in breadth and depth only, and never in length, they, at the same time, necessarily lose their original shape and assume one more prominent and remarkable. Now, as many states of our minds, such as fear, anger, mirth, grief, profound thought, &c. occasion the exertion of particular sets of muscles, it must inevitably happen that the face of a man whose mind is very frequently in one of those states, should acquire that permanent character which is the effect, and therefore the sign, of it. The face of Mr. Watt, if I may judge of it from Chantry's admirable statue, was a very striking example of this species of sign.

Besides those effects which the mind of man produces upon his body, and which only endure at farthest so long as the vital principle keeps together the elements which compose that body, we are surrounded on every side by the permanent impressions which his genius and passions have left upon the material world.

We see much larger masses of matter than the Egyptian pyramids; considered as mountains, they would be insignificant. But when we read in them a description, as it were, of the perse-

vering and prodigious labours of those early builders, of the power and magnificence of those deified kings, who

> " With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
> Fanatic Egypt,"

and whose forms and movements we obscurely discern in the uncertain dawn of history ;—when we read all this in those most wonderful monuments, we experience an emotion, vague indeed rom the variety of its causes and the consequent wandering of the attention, but sublime in the very highest degree.

Nor have the destructive energies of the human mind failed to leave traces as deep and as interesting on the objects of sense. It would be difficult to point out a finer passage in any poem than the following, from the Georgics,—

> Scilicet et tempus veniet quum, finibus illis,
> Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
> Exesa inveniet scabra rubigine pila,
> Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanes,
> Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulchris.

The two examples I have just adduced agree in that circumstance which induced me to arrange them under the same head, but they differ in another circumstance of considerable importance. The Egyptian monarchs, undoubtedly, intended the Pyramids to excite the wonder of mankind, but the hostile factions who contended

at Pharsalia and Philippi did not engage in mutual slaughter with any wish or intention that their rusted armour and whitened bones should become sources of sublimity to a remote posterity.

It will be seen from what follows, that the distinction between these two examples, the distinction, that is, between those effects of human feelings which are called works of art, and those which are not works of art, is essential to a clear comprehension of the subject.

A work of art brings to our minds the feelings and passions of men in two different ways, which will be best understood by an example. The picture of Ugolino, by Reynolds, brings to our minds the feelings of Ugolino and his children, and is, on that account, extremely sublime ; but it also brings to our minds the genius and skill of Reynolds, of which it is the effect, and that genius and skill are, themselves, states or habits of mind which excite the emotions of sublimity and beauty.

Now it is, in respect of this latter circumstance, that works of art, as such, fall under the class and subdivision I am now considering. The artist may, for the furtherance of his purpose, make use of various sorts of signs, and he may also confine himself to one or more sorts, rejecting the rest; but it is not in his power to prevent his work from being a sign of the particu-

lar kind I am now discussing; namely, a sign suggesting those qualities of his own mind of which it is the effect. Therefore, though works of art may be given as examples, under any of the heads to which the signs used by the artist happen to be referable, this is the proper place in which to treat of works of art as such.

The circumstance that works of art suggest those mental qualities which invented and arranged them, causes us to judge of their effect by very different criteria from those which guide our decisions upon the Sublime and Beautiful in nature.

Perhaps the most beautiful object in nature is a beautiful human figure, although to every human figure belong disagreeable and humiliating incidents. But if an artist should venture to introduce any of these incidents in a work intended to excite sublime or beautiful emotions, the pleasure we might have derived from such parts of his work as were well adapted to the end in view would be, perhaps, totally destroyed by reflections upon the coarseness and indelicacy of that mind which could designedly unite such hateful incongruities; at any rate, would be much more impaired than the pleasure arising from a similar sublime or beautiful object in nature would be by the unfortunate presence of similar incongruities.

I have seen a painting of the Storm on the Lake of Gennesaret, said to be by Rembrandt, in which there is a man vomiting over the side of

the vessel. Nothing certainly can be more natural; it is what would almost certainly happen under the supposed circumstances; yet this forms no sort of justification to the painter for introducing into a picture, intended to produce a sublime effect, an incident counteracting that effect, which it was completely at his option to omit, and therefore does not prevent his work from partaking of that grossness and vulgarity which must have characterised his mind.

It is true that a poet of the highest genius, and whose style is distinguished for its gravity, has not hesitated to bring together incongruities still more shocking. I allude to what Lucretius says of women in his fourth Book; but it was his express object to destroy, if possible, the effect of that beauty which, as a philosopher, he thought pernicious, by polluting it with odious associations. Therefore, when we read the passage, we draw no inference against the taste of Lucretius; we see plainly that he is in the condition of a man making a great sacrifice of his feelings for the attainment of an object which he considered of greater importance.

Even where two ideas are both sublime or beautiful, yet if they are of such opposite characters as to counteract the effect of each other, they ought not to be brought together by an artist, though they may be found together in nature. The effect resulting from the neglect of this rule

may be well illustrated by comparing Homer's famous simile—

Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρα φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην
Φαίνετ' ἀριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ' ἔπλετο νήνεμος αἰθὴρ,
Ἔκ τ' ἔφανον πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ, καὶ πρώονες ἄκροι,
Καὶ νάπαι· οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερῤῥάγη ἄσπετος αἰθὴρ,
Πάντα δέ τ' εἴδεται ἄστρα· γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν.

with Pope's translation of it:

"As when the moon—refulgent lamp of night—
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene,
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole,
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head,—
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies,
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault and bless the useful light."

Mr. Wordsworth, I believe, first remarked that Pope's translation is neither like Homer nor nature, but without pointing out the particular defects to which he alludes. The fault seems to me to consist in the way in which Pope has destroyed that expression of deep and undisturbed tranquillity—which is so remarkable in a moonlight scene as Nature presents it, and as Homer has copied it—by covering it with one unmitigated blaze of splendour, and introducing into it the idea of whirling motion. The first is not in nature at all—it is

an exaggeration, not heightening, but counteracting the real expression of the prospect. The last is indeed in nature, but it is not presented by nature to the senses; if it were, the scene would have a very different character from what it now has, and a representation of it would no longer be a proper means of soothing the mind into a mood of profound repose. Pope had no occasion to advert to the motion of the planets, and if he chose to do so, he should at least have studied to reconcile rapidity with rest, as Milton has done so exquisitely in the analogous case of the earth's motion:

> "Or she from west her silent course advance
> With inoffensive pace, that spinning sleeps
> On her soft axle."

Again, in works of art we are not satisfied unless we perceive a constant attention to method and design. Even in music, the least intellectual of all the fine arts, whose office it is to excite and soothe the passions, to throw the mind into all the various moods of which it is susceptible, without calling upon the imagination to set forth distinct ideas, or upon the understanding to attend to their relations, we nevertheless require the traces of a presiding and directing intellect;—we require that a purpose, and a selection of means contributing to that purpose, should be discoverable by those who search for them, not for their own sake indeed, but because no powerful and sustain-

ed effect can be produced without them. If the product of an Eolian harp were noted and offered to us as a work of art, it would be received with deserved contempt, though we might be pleased with the very same succession of sounds considered as the effect of wandering and unconscious breezes.

In the more intellectual arts,—and especially in poetry, the most intellectual,—it is essential that the elements of which it consists should be so arranged as constantly to present a distinct meaning, which meaning is the expression of learning, ingenuity, profundity, &c. in the mind of the author. The object of every poem, as such, like that of every musical composition, is the production of sublimity and beauty; but every poem must contain throughout a train of thought addressed to the understanding, and separable from those characteristics which constitute it a poem. Thus, the epic poem contains the narration of a story, the drama the representation of a story, the didactic poem contains the explanation of a system, the ode contains the description of various objects of the moral or natural world, things which may all be separated from the poetry in which they are involved, and presented to the understanding alone. Nevertheless, the presentation of these various combinations to the understanding is not the end of any poem as such,

though it is certainly the end of many compositions to which it is impossible to deny the name of poem. We cannot indeed suppose that Virgil wrote his Georgics for the purpose of teaching husbandry; we should rather say that he taught husbandry for the purpose of producing poetical delight. But I see no reason for refusing credit to the professions with which Lucretius opens his fourth Book, that his purpose was to teach the doctrines of the Epicurean philosophy, and that his poetry was but the honey with which he tempted his friend to swallow the wholesome but bitter draught of instruction. I have already alluded to a passage in the same book, where he gives a striking proof that these professions are sincere.

A mere assemblage of images connected by no thread of meaning, although every image should be both beautiful and, as far as beauty is concerned, in harmony with all the other images of the assemblage, can never receive much admiration considered as a work of art. Considered however as a work of nature, it might receive a very considerable degree of admiration. In Europe a nosegay is a work of nature, in Arabia it is said to be frequently a work of art, flowers being used as conventional signs by which a poem or other composition may be expressed. The same unmeaning collection of flowers, then, which

would be justly thought beautiful by an European lady, might excite disappointment or contempt in the mind of an Arabian lady who expected to find a sonnet couched in it.

It is true that no one who has merely tied up a bundle of flowers would be foolish enough to assume the merit of having produced a work of art, but there are some literary compositions which, whatever may be the beauty of the separate images they contain, present nothing that can satisfy the understanding, and consequently fail to produce that continuous and sustained effect upon the imagination and the heart which can only be produced through the medium of the understanding. In the poems called Ossian's are assembled (no matter from what quarters) all the most sublime and beautiful emotions of which our nature is susceptible, and all the sensible objects which most copiously and vividly reflect such emotions; but out of these materials the author has constructed manners, characters, events, and a form of society not only such as never can, consistently with experience, have existed, but such as no hypothesis can reconcile with each other.

What has been just said furnishes, I apprehend, the explanation of that boundless admiration and that boundless contempt which have been lavished upon these poems. The young and inexperienced have been struck by the beauty of the images,

while those of mature judgment have been disgusted by the want of every other excellence. Madame de Stael is the only person of distinguished genius, as far as I recollect, who has spoken highly of these compositions; and whoever has read her "L'Allemagne" must know that she had a peculiar and enthusiastic admiration for every thing that is at once beautiful and without apparent purpose.

A work of art should in no case suggest the idea of such mental qualities in its author, as are the natural objects of aversion or contempt. Neither should it excite even the ideas of genius, judgment, and learning, in such a way as to interfere with the professed object of the work, if it have any object different from the mere display of the author's talents. I have already said that an artist cannot prevent his work from being the sign of those qualities in his mind which gave birth to it; but when he has produced excellence of a high order, those qualities do not force themselves upon our attention. We all read the finest parts of Homer or Shakspeare, without thinking of Homer or Shakspeare themselves, and what we principally admire when we do come to think of them, is that magical genius whose presence we overlooked amid the engrossing interest excited by its own creations.

There are however some mental qualities which may be employed in producing works of art, whose

property it is to attract attention to themselves, because their effects have no other beauty than what they derive from being the signs of their causes. Such are all those qualities productive of that pleasure which the French critics call "Le plaisir de la difficulté vaincue."

When one thing is made to resemble another, we undoubtedly derive some pleasure from the perception of it, if we apprehend the difficulty of bringing it into that condition to be considerable, and believe, consequently, that considerable skill has been exerted by the artist who has overcome that difficulty. Adam Smith has remarked in his Essay on the imitative arts, that we admire the representation of many things in a painting, of which we should not at all admire the representation in sculpture, and this he very justly ascribes to the greater difficulty of imitating the relief of solid objects upon a flat surface, compared with that of imitating one solid object by another solid object. I am speaking now of the imitation of such objects as are not themselves the signs of any Sublime or Beautiful quality of mind,—in popular language such objects as are not themselves sublime or beautiful,—the representations of which can be no otherwise sublime or beautiful than as they are the signs of the skill which produced them, such (for instance) as the handle of a door, of which I have somewhere seen an imitation in painting so perfect as, at first sight, to deceive the eye.

Now the introduction of such an imitation into a picture intended to excite powerful emotions,—or even the application of that sort of skill which constitutes the beauty of such an object,—to the delineation, in such a picture, of an object possessing beauty of a different order, would be a very considerable defect, because it would draw off the attention from the true object of the picture, and, by so doing, would also indicate that the artist was deficient in a sort of skill much nobler and more intellectual than that which he had injudiciously displayed. No man of taste can endure that his reflections upon the death of Cleopatra should be interrupted by the obtrusive accuracy with which the velvet or satin of her dress is depicted. The artist, therefore, who wishes to show how well he can represent satin and velvet with his pencil, should paint a silk mercer's window, but not a dying queen. For so doing he will have the high authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

What I have been saying leads me naturally to consider the subject of what has been called "illusion" in the fine arts, under which name things most disparate have been confounded together. We are told of the illusion produced by the painted handle of a door, and the illusion produced by the representation of a tragedy.

In the first place, the spectator of the painted door-handle can experience no pleasure till the illusion is dissipated; the spectator of a tragedy

enjoys his pleasure in the greatest perfection, while the illusion, if it must be so called, subsists. But secondly, the illusion in the first case is so in the strict sense of the word, it consists in mistaking one thing for another; whereas the only illusion which we have the power to produce in the second case,—and the only illusion which would be worth producing whatever might be in our power,—consists in keeping the attention of the spectator rivetted exclusively upon the passions of which the language and gestures exhibited to the senses are the signs. Now, if this be illusion, then are we also illuded when we see a display of interesting feelings in real life. If the mind of a man, who actually heard Cardinal Wolsey lamenting the loss of his power, were occupied in considering whether the man whose complaints he heard were really Wolsey,—whether the place in which they were uttered were really King Henry's palace,—and in deciding that these things respectively were, in fact, what they at first sight appeared to be,—the situation of that man, as far as tragic interest is concerned, would not differ at all from the situation of a man who, after a like consideration, should come to the conclusion, that Mr. Kean and Drury Lane were the real objects presented to his senses. So that the same sort of illusion which is necessary to affect us with the exhibition of human passions on the stage, is also necessary to

affect us with the exhibition of them in real life. The only difference is, that the desired illusion is much less completely produced in a theatrical representation, and this arises from two causes. First, from the real difficulty of preventing the intrusion of our knowledge, that what we see is an artificial representation; and secondly, from the very means which we employ to produce illusion of another kind. What an admirable view of Rome! What classical accuracy of costume! Such are the remarks which irresistibly force themselves upon the attention of the audience, when it should be wholly engrossed by the eloquence of Anthony, or the vehement contention of Brutus and Cassius.

I am perfectly aware, however, that a great part of this defect cannot be obviated by any means in our power. To dress Roman senators in the habit of the day, as our ancestors did, would be far more destructive of the true tragic enjoyment by its hideous incongruity, than the present practice is by its beauty and elaborate propriety. In selecting the scenery we are not however reduced to this dilemma. The difference between the costume of ancient Rome and that of modern Europe is absolutely irreconcileable, and no medium can be conceived which should not attract attention either by its obtrusive aptitude or its flagrant impropriety; but the decorations of places in the ancient and modern world are by no

means so dissimilar. A few unobtrusive trees or a few unobtrusive columns, are neither peculiarly Roman nor peculiarly English, and if no scene-shifter insists upon our noticing them by thrusting off one set and thrusting on another, they may stand before our eyes through the five acts of a tragedy without our being at all conscious of their presence, as I have myself experienced at the Théatre Français.

I am by no means affecting to despise the pleasure derived from the exhibition of beautiful scenery or of beautiful spectacle in general; I am only contending that it is not consistent with the full enjoyment of that more refined pleasure which it is the proper object of tragedy to excite, and that it ought therefore to be confined to its own province, the melo-drame.

The general result of what has been said with regard to the fine arts is, that the artist should state to himself, distinctly, the sort of pleasure he means to produce, and should resolutely exclude every thing which interferes with it.

Subdivision II.—Sensible Objects which resemble or are analogous to those last mentioned.

There are many objects both of art and nature which exhibit appearances reminding us of the feelings of sentient beings by the likeness

which those appearances bear to the real effects of such feelings.

A torrent imitates the fury of a rabid animal by the violence and angular abruptness of its motions, by the corresponding abruptness of the sounds it utters, and by the foam which it scatters around. So strongly do these qualities of the inanimate object express passion, that in all languages the epithets corresponding to "furious, indignant, raging," &c. are without scruple applied to it, and we cannot therefore wonder that an object to which all mankind agree in applying such epithets should also be called sublime. On the contrary, it would be matter of great surprise, if an object which so affects our minds, as to force us, in a manner, to describe it by the epithets proper to sublime passions, should not also excite in us the emotion of sublimity.

A weeping willow, as the very name of the species indicates, represents the attitude, and therefore partakes of the beauty of sorrow. The effect of sorrow on the human frame is to prevent all muscular exertion, consequently every part which in ordinary circumstances is sustained by such exertion alone, droops and collapses under the influence of that depressing passion. Every thing, therefore, which droops (for that word seems to express the whole idea of bending downwards, without any pressure, from the mere effect of gravitation and the want of support)

has a sorrowful and beautiful expression. Hence it is, that the painters when they would fill the mind with images of grief, not only dispose the heads and limbs of their figures as grief would dispose them, but take care that the hair and the drapery shall also droop, though it is just as consistent with probability that they should be fluttering in the wind. The poets make a similar use of similar circumstances. When the horse of Achilles in Homer prophesies the fate of his master, his mane becomes a type of emotion proper to the occasion.

Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ὑποζυγόφιν προσέφη πόδας αἰόλος ἵππος
Ξάνθος, ἄφαρ δ' ἤμυσε καρήατι, πᾶσα δὲ χαίτη,
Ζεύγλης ἐξεριποῦσα παρὰ ζυγὸν, οὖδας ἵκανεν.

In battle men are agitated and excited; in a battle-piece, therefore, the banners of either army stream freely and gallantly upon the gale,

"Conjurati veniunt ad classica venti."

In the painting of a funeral they hang in heavy folds, and seem to sympathize with the feelings of those that mourn.

To prevent confusion, I must here remark that I am not now contrasting one set of the signs which a painter *employs* with another set which he *employs*. What I contrast is one set of those signs which a painter *imitates* with an-

other set which he *imitates*. *All* the signs which he *employs* are likenesses of something, and therefore proper to be given as examples under this head; and so are the productions of all the fine arts which imitate sensible objects, in so far as they do imitate them.

I have already taken occasion to point out that it is by no means necessary that an imitation should be mistaken for the thing imitated, in order to produce the same moral effect. But there are some cases which form apparent exceptions to this doctrine, and which it may be as well to examine in this place. The illustration put by Mr. Alison of the rumbling of a cart mistaken for thunder, is a case of this kind; and a hasty generalization of such instances might lead to the supposition that signs which have no real connexion with sublime or beautiful feelings, cannot excite the emotions of sublimity and beauty, unless they are considered as having a real connexion; in other words, unless they are thought to be that which in truth they only resemble.

That the sublimity belonging to the sound of thunder vanishes, when we discover that we have mistaken the rumbling of a cart for it, is unquestionably true; but this effect, I think, is amply accounted for by the two following considerations.

First, our attention is suddenly and forcibly

drawn to the fact that what we hear is not thunder, and surprise is excited at the previous illusion.

Secondly, not only do we discover that what we hear is not the voice of conflicting elements, but that it is the noise of a very mean and common machine. The result of this incongruous mixture of the vulgar with the sublime is a sort of natural parody, which, if known in the first instance to be such, might produce the amusement proper to a parody; but which, not being known at first for what it really is, produces the same effect which we should experience if we took up unknowingly a parody of Homer or Milton, and began to read it in that state of mind with which we approach the "Iliad," and the "Paradise Lost."

Claudian describes the horse of Honorius in this gorgeous line:

"Sanguineo dignus morsu vexare smaragdos."

Now the horse of an emperor on the stage would be decorated with false emeralds, and the spectators know it to be so; nevertheless the effect of splendour is very well kept up by such means. But if a poet were to speak of a charger worthy to bite glass and green foil, he would produce burlesque by drawing attention to the vileness of the materials by which imperial pomp and magnificence are simulated.

The very same tones and gestures which, when assumed by an actor, excite in the spectators the tenderest emotions, when assumed by a mendicant impostor, for the purpose of abusing the natural sympathies of mankind, excite nothing but contempt and indignation. We are equally aware in both cases, that the signs of distress which we hear and see are not the effects of real distress; but in the latter case we are further aware, and being aware cannot for an instant forget, that they are the base artifices by which treachery and cunning minister to the demands of selfish and coarse sensuality.

Subdivision III.—Sensible Objects which are the Causes of Sublime or Beautiful Feelings.

All those material objects which are known or apprehended to be the causes of Sublime or Beautiful feelings, are themselves considered as Sublime or Beautiful.

Before I adduce any example under this head, it is necessary to guard against the possibility of misapprehension. I am very far from supposing that any object of sense can, by its mere organic effect upon us, give rise immediately to the emotions of sublimity or beauty. But it is undoubtedly true that some objects of sense are the natural causes of various feelings and passions in our minds, which give rise to the emotions in question.

The exuberant hilarity and forgetfulness of importunate cares which wine inspires,

> "Spes donare novas largus, amaraque
> Curarum eluere efficax,"

have given it a place, among objects of beauty, to which it never could have been raised by its power of producing the sensual pleasures of the palate. Hence its common epithet "generous" is expressive of sentiment, and odes and sonnets abound with the poetical praises bestowed on it by its votaries.

There are also certain qualities of the human figure which naturally excite that very powerful emotion, the desire of sexual intercourse. These qualities, when unaccompanied by any of the other indications of sublime or beautiful feelings, constitute that very peculiar species of beauty, that κάλλος ἄτερ χαρίτων, which is found, I think, no where but in the human form and countenance, and which extorts from men of a refined taste an unwilling admiration and reluctant homage.

The sense of danger, by which I do not mean the passion of fear, is a very sublime emotion, and it is caused by a great multitude of sensible objects; for sensible objects exercise a power over our bodies very different from that by which in ordinary cases they stimulate the organs of sense, leaving those organs, when the stimulus is past, uninjured and fit to perform the

same function again, when the same occasion recurs. Our vision may be blasted by intense light, our hearing by insufferable noise; we may be poisoned by deleterious drugs, and suffocated by the stench of mephitic vapours; finally, we may be destroyed with every kind and degree of torture, by the division and laceration of the various tissues which compose our bodies.

I have already noticed the moral character which a torrent derives, from the way in which it imitates the rage of sentient beings, by its noise, its gestures, and its foam; the same torrent becomes an object of still sublimer interest, when we consider that it may have,—perhaps know that it actually has,—hurled from precipice to precipice the mangled limbs of some wretch, whom mischance or murderous design has thrust within the reach of its violence.

Most of the sensible objects which are capable of being arranged under this head exhibit, like the example just adduced, signs belonging to other heads, but sometimes the sense of danger is produced by causes which are in other respects quite insignificant—"res agitur tenui pulmone rubetæ." In the cauldron of the witches we find together such ingredients as,

> "Maw and gulf
> Of the ravening salt-sea shark,
> Root of hemlock digged i' the dark."

The savage and furious appetite which we be-

lieve to agitate the sea-monster contribute to his terrible sublimity no less than the recollection that he is wont to appease his famine with human flesh; but the root of hemlock is no unfitting ingredient of the same hell-broth, though we do not attribute its deadly effects to any passion for destruction, nor suppose it to watch with cruel delight the gradual extinction of its victims.

All those things which are sublime in respect of their large dimensions, will be found, I believe, upon examination, to belong to this class of signs.

The word large is always a relative term, but it is not always relative to the same things. An animal may be large with relation to others of the same species; but its largeness can only be sublime when it is such as to indicate a degree of strength, which would be dangerous to man, if exerted against him. A space may be great with relation to other spaces, or even with relation to the human form; but it can only be sublime when it is such as, with reference to our usual velocity, cannot be passed over by us without the lapse of such a period of time, as constitutes at the least a considerable portion of human life. The space between the sun and the earth is extremely sublime, but it would shrink in our apprehension to the familiar dimensions of a ten minutes' walk, if our habitual progress were as rapid as that of light. When I speak of our usual velocity, I mean only such

velocity as exhibits itself to the senses; for the earth's circumference is not regarded as a day's journey, though each of us passes over that space every day, but as a voyage of many months, though few of us ever perform that voyage. This, I apprehend, is the sole origin of that sublimity which belongs to extension abstracted from all the various circumstances with which it may be combined. These circumstances modify its effect upon the mind in a multitude of different ways. The force and direction of gravity make ascent and descent toilsome and perilous; hence a mountain of six thousand feet is very sublime, a plain of the same extent is not so. A height very inconsiderable in other respects, if it suggest the notion of danger or destruction attending a fall from it, is more sublime than a horizontal space ten thousand times as long. The ocean is an object replete with such various and such complex associations, that it would require a very careful analysis to determine how much of its boundless sublimity is to be attributed to its magnitude.

Subdivision IV.—Sensible Objects which resemble or are analogous to those last mentioned.

No detail seems necessary of this subdivision of Signs. They consist chiefly of artificial representations of the objects contained in the last

subdivision, such, for example, as a picture of a torrent or a wild beast. Remarks applicable to them will be found under other heads, and need not be here repeated.

Subdivision V.—Sensible Objects which resemble or are analogous to Sublime or Beautiful Feelings.

The second and fourth subdivisions of Natural Signs consist of external objects resembling certain other external objects which are connected with mental feelings. But there are also many external objects which may be compared to the mental feelings themselves, and so become signs of them. These comparisons have place principally in respect of duration and its various modifications, for external objects and internal feelings are equally susceptible of those modifications.

A thought may fade from the mind sooner than the colour fades from a flower. Our garments may last longer than our resolutions. Our intentions may change more frequently than the moon. A rock and a tower are the natural types of a firm and constant character; the wind and the weathercock are the appropriate emblems of the contrary disposition.

Virgil has in this way illustrated the state of his hero's mind:

> "Talia per Latium: quæ Laomedontius heros
> Cuncta videns, magno curarum fluctuat æstu,

Atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc,
In partesque rapit varias perque omnia versat.
Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ahenis
Sole repercussum aut radiantis imagine lunæ,
Omnia pervolitat late loca, jamque sub auras
Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti."

And one of the most exquisite passages in Shakspeare depends upon the same sort of analogy:

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
That weighs upon the heart?"

CLASS II.—CASUAL SIGNS.

Casual signs, that is, such objects as happen to have been perceived by us at the same time that any interesting feelings occupied our minds, are of such a nature that every man is necessarily best qualified to find out for himself the most striking examples of them. There are some species of them, however, which are constant and common to all mankind, though each individual of the species is casual and peculiar to some individual mind. Of this description are the places in which we have been affected with interesting feelings. To every man of reflection the scenes of his childhood afford an intense though somewhat melancholy pleasure. Gray's

ode, in which this association is beautifully illustrated, is too familiar to need quotation.

CLASS III.– CONVENTIONAL SIGNS.

The term conventional has been generally applied to a certain very important class of signs; but it is proper to remark, that mere convention can never of itself make one thing the sign of another. In order to carry the convention into effect, the two things which it is intended to use as sign and signification must by some associating process be connected together in the mind. The associating process which is most under the dominion of the will is that of habitual juxtaposition, and it is accordingly by the habitual juxtaposition of the sounds "house, river, tree," with houses, rivers, and trees, or the representations of them, that those sounds come to be the signs of the ideas they now suggest. We do not then agree that one thing shall be the sign of another, but we agree to take the measures necessary for making one thing the sign of another.

Whenever we are obliged to search a dictionary for the meaning of a word, that word is not, strictly speaking, a sign, though it is made, by the intermediate process of looking it out, to answer the purpose of a sign. It is associated with its signification not in our minds, but in the pages of the dictionary. Such purely conventional terms can, however, convey a proposition

from one understanding to another, slowly indeed, but still effectually. But where the object is to rouse the feelings, they fall very far short of the effect which is produced by natural or habitual signs.

I have frequently imagined with what a simultaneous burst of patriotic enthusiasm Nelson's signal at Trafalgar would have been received, if the whole fleet could have read at the same instant, "England expects every man to do his duty," as it streamed from the mast-head of the Victory, and thought how the effect of the great admiral's rhetoric must have been frittered away when it was necessary to search out the meaning of every flag in the signal-book, and to construct the sentence by bringing its scattered elements together.

It is manifest that habitual signs, prior to their becoming habitual, may be either natural signs or wholly insignificant; and if they be natural signs, the things which they naturally signify may be either the same as, or similar to, the things they are made by habit to signify, or they may be unlike or contrary to those things. For logical purposes it is desirable that a system of habitual signs should have no meaning at all, but that which we designedly affix to them. Such is the system of algebraic signs. But, wherever the imagination or the feelings are to be excited, it is desirable that the habitual signs should be

natural signs also, either of the same things as they habitually signify, or of something resembling or analogous to those things. Such are the signs employed in hieroglyphic systems and the heraldic signs emblazoned on shields and banners. There was a great contest formerly between the English and French heralds, the latter contending that what the former called Lions in the arms of England, are in reality Leopards. I do not know which were in the right, but I am sure that the national and scientific animosity of the parties must have been greatly aggravated by the notable difference in character which popular opinion attributes to the animals which they respectively adopted and rejected.

In all languages with which I have any acquaintance, many of the words which designate sounds are mere imitations of those sounds, but there are other words which by their length or shortness, by the openness or closeness of their vowels, and by the facility or difficulty with which they are pronounced, enable the poet or rhetorician to invest the ideas he wishes to excite with the analogous qualities of the sounds he employs. The asperity of the obstacles which love will surmount, is vividly portrayed in the expression,

"Illas ducit amor trans Gargara,"

and, as Virgil might here have used a thousand other words without injury to the mere

logical sense of the passage, I think we may conclude that he chose the word "Gargara," on account of its harsh and difficult enunciation. The word "exaggeration," from its length and the loaded emphasis of its second syllable, has a very manifest analogy with its meaning. A flea and a hippopotamus could not change names without a very palpable loss of rhetorical effect.

Although such words are valuable materials to those writers who address themselves to the imagination or the feelings, yet, as they are not numerous, the style of poets and orators would have been very tame and insipid, were it not that another and more artificial method has presented itself, by which one thing, without any appearance of harshness or constraint, may be invested with the kindred attributes of another. By constant juxtaposition sounds become the signs of ideas, that is, become capable of exciting those ideas in the mind, and consequently, however insignificant they may be considered as mere sounds, they become, through the medium of the ideas they excite, without any convention or habit, the natural signs, as it were, of any other ideas which resemble or are analogous to those of which they become the signs by convention and habit. The words, Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, are the conventional or habitual signs of the four seasons of the year: considered as signs they have no analogy at all to their conventional meaning, but they have acquired,

by habit, the power of exciting in our minds all those images and relations which constitute the complex notions of the several seasons, and hence they have become the natural signs of the youth, maturity, decline, and decay of sentient beings, and would, therefore, be understood by a person who had never heard them applied to such a purpose before.

In this way a figurative expression, when heard for the first time, possesses a force and energy beyond that of a mere habitual sign; for, as several writers have remarked, we do not in general raise up in our minds the ideas which words represent, but, so long as no unusual association startles us, we pass on satisfied with the mere sounds, and with the consciousness, that we have the power of raising the ideas at pleasure. But when we come to a new figurative expression, we find ourselves under the absolute necessity of raising the ideas which constitute its habitual or literal signification, in order to comprehend what it is employed to signify in the passage before us.

Thus when we read for the first time the following passage from Samson Agonistes,

> "The sun to me is dark,
> And silent as the moon,
> When she deserts the night
> Hid in her vacant interlunar cave,"

we pass over without any hesitation the as-

sertion that the sun is dark to a blind man; but when the sun is said to be silent no one can instantly acquiesce in such a proposition, and before we can comprehend what is meant, we must excite in our imaginations the ideas of silence and of the sun, and by comparing those ideas we come to perceive that, as silence is the privation of objects of hearing, and the sun an object of sight, the word silence must here signify an idea which bears the same relation to objects of sight, which the idea it commonly signifies bears to sounds, in short, that silent must in this place mean invisible—a conclusion at which we never could have arrived without examining the ideas themselves.*

In this manner it is that a figurative term, when heard for the first time, possesses the same peculiarities that belong to a term which has a natural analogy to its meaning, when such a term is also heard for the first time; viz. the peculiarity of being intelligible independently of habit, and that of being unintelligible without an effort of the imagination.

When the constant use of such words has rendered the former peculiarity undiscernible, they cease to possess the latter. I do not mean that

* The figure is borrowed from Dante, and it would therefore be possible for a person to whom the expression "Dove il sol tace," is familiar, to comprehend Milton's meaning without having recourse to the ideas, by means of the association between the words "silent" and "tace."

they have no longer the capacity of stimulating the imagination, but only that they no longer compel the reader to the alternative of either setting his imagination to work or passing over the passage before him without comprehending its meaning. This I apprehend is what Aristotle means when he says of metaphor in his Rhetoric καὶ λαβεῖν οὔκ ἐστιν ἄυτην παρ᾽ ἄλλου. The philosopher, as it seems to me, does not wish us to understand that there is any special impropriety in borrowing a metaphor from another writer, but that it is not possible to borrow that peculiar advantage which the inventor derived from it.*

* Mr. Harris, in a note to page 190 of his Philological Inquiries, puts a very different construction upon Aristotle's words, being convinced by the similarity which is certainly remarkable in a passage from the same author's Poetics, that the meaning must be the same in both places. The passage in the Poetics is as follows: τὸ δὲ μέγιστον τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι· μόνον γὰρ τοῦτο, οὔτε παρ᾽ ἄλλου ἐστὶ λαβεῖν, εὐφυΐας τε σημεῖόν ἐστι· τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν, τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστι. (Poetic. see 37.) But admitting that the similarity of the expression to that in the Rhetoric proves identity of meaning, still it seems to me much less improbable that παρ᾽ ἄλλου λαβεῖν τοῦτο (sc. τὸ μεταφορικὸν εἶναι) should mean to borrow metaphors from other writers, which I take to be the obvious sense of the passage in the Rhetoric, than that λαβεῖν ταύτην (sc. μεταφορὰν) παρ᾽ ἄλλου, should mean to acquire (that is, to acquire by instruction from others) the being powerful in metaphor, which is the sense Mr. Harris puts upon the passage in the Poetics. The remainder of the sentence is not at all injured by the sense for which I contend; for, whether Aristotle meant that metaphors cannot be borrowed, but must be

But although metaphors lose, as soon as they are no longer new, the superiority which they originally possessed over mere habitual signs in respect to the power of raising images in the mind, still, like all other signs which represent ideas having a moral character, they become associated with that character in such a way, that they excite emotions in the mind even when they raise no images, or, at least, when we are not conscious that any images are raised. Sounds become magnetised, as it were, by the habitual contact of pathetic ideas, and acquire to themselves that power of moving the passions which at first they could exercise only by means of ideas. The mere sound of the word "spring" inspires "vernal delight"—the mere sound of the word summer sends "a summer feeling to the heart." Multitudes of such words will occur to the memory of every reader, (death, pestilence, liberty, revenge, Marathon, Thermopylæ, may serve as examples,) and by the judicious use of them a writer may accompany those ideas, which form the thread of his discourse, with a continuous strain of emotion not very different from those strains which are produced by the succession of musical tones. Milton has

invented, or that the power of writing metaphorically cannot be acquired by instruction, but must be the native product of the mind, it was equally proper for him to add that the same is a mark of genius.

done this with most extraordinary success in the description he gives of the principal personages of Satan's army.

It is possible, therefore, by means of a metaphor, however trite, provided it have not lost its literal signification, to invest one thing with the moral attributes of another. Cicero gives an example of this and of its sophistical effect in reasoning, in his fragment De Republicâ. " Sed more quodam fallimur ita disputando, cum enim optumates appellantur, nihil potest videri præstabilius. Quid enim optumo melius cogitari potest?" It would be manifestly desirable for a rhetorician when he is calling a tyrannical oligarchy *optumates*, that the metaphor should be trite, that the audience should institute no comparison between the literal and the figurative meaning. The more familiar the figurative application of the term, the more certain is the rhetorician of the advantage to be derived from the moral associations which the word has acquired from its literal meaning. Of course, the very same principle which would induce a defender of oligarchy to use the term *optumates*, would induce an opposer of that form of government to abstain from using it. But it sometimes happens that the only name of the thing we wish to express is a term transferred figuratively from something else. Theocritus describes most vividly the

brawny muscular form and gigantic strength of Amycus:

> Στήθεα δ' ἐσφαίρωτο πελώρια, καὶ πλάτυ νῶτον,
> Σαρκὶ σιδαρείῃ, σφυρήλατος οἷα κολοσσός·
> Ἐν δὲ μύες στερεῦσι βραχίοσιν ἄκρον ὑπ' ὦμον
> Ἔστασαν, ἦντε πέτροι ὁλοοίτροχοι, οὔστε κυλίνδων
> Χειμάῤῥους ποταμὸς μεγάλαις περιέξεσε δίναις·

Every thing here contributes to the general effect but the unlucky word μύες; unlucky it certainly is, bringing to mind, as it does, that muscles derived their name from the likeness to such a little, weak, contemptible animal as a mouse.

The association between sounds and the moral character of the ideas they represent is frequently so strong, that the sound itself seems to be changed.

> "Cum bello puero præconem qui videt esse."
>
> "Atque hinc undantem bello magnumque fluentem Nilum."

One who reads these two passages is hardly sensible, that in both of them he has uttered the same sound. To a man thinking, in Latin, the word "carmen" appears a sound of great beauty. To a man thinking, in English, the same sound appears mean and uninteresting. The word "thunder" seems to agree so well in character with its meaning, that I was at first doubtful whether it is applicable to my present purpose, but when I recollect that the word "un-

der" has essentially the same sound, and that in such expressions as "an undertone"—"to undermine"—"underhand," it is so far from having a sonorous character, that it seems to shrink from the perception of the senses, I cannot but believe that the word "thunder," if stripped of its associations, would not be peculiarly fit

"To bellow through the vast and boundless deep."

I have now classified and described, though in a very cursory way, the external objects which excite the emotions of Sublimity and Beauty, according to the different ways in which they become fitted for that purpose; but the slender outline of the subject, which is all I profess to delineate, would not be complete without some examination of those objects, according to the classification which has been given to them in respect of the different organs by which they are perceived.

It is by the sense of touch only that we at once acquire the notion of externality, and perceive external things. By the eye we perceive nothing but light, with its varieties of colour and intensity. Experience, however, very soon teaches us that many of these varieties represent the varieties belonging to objects of touch, and, as soon as this connexion between the two senses is once firmly established in our minds, we trust to our eyes to give us information in all ordinary

cases, concerning the distances and figures of external objects; and the touch, which originally explained to us the meaning of the modifications of light, is neglected, like the Dictionary of a language with which it has made us familiar. Indeed, from the length of time which is required to examine a complicated, or a large object by the touch, and from the consequent difficulty of retaining distinct notions of the parts, so as to construct a complete notion of a whole, that sense is a very inconvenient instrument for such a purpose, when compared with the sight which can take in, as it were simultaneously, all the parts of a large and complicated object, and so enable us to apprehend those relations of each part to the others, which constitute a whole. The result is, that the visible qualities of objects, so explained by their tangible qualities, have acquired a marked pre-eminence above the qualities perceived by all the other senses. The visible qualities are, in fact, considered as the external objects themselves, while the qualities perceived by the other senses are considered as the qualities only of external objects. When we speak of a rose, a harp, or a pine-apple, we think of certain collections of visible qualities; when we speak of the smell of a rose, the sound of a harp, the taste of a pine-apple, we think of something superadded to those collections of visible qualities. If we met with individuals

having the visible qualities of a rose, a harp, or a pine-apple, but wanting their respective smell, sound, and taste, we should undoubtedly call them respectively an inodorous rose, a silent harp, a tasteless pine-apple. Perception is a term commonly applied to all the senses; but when we say, "I perceive a rose, a harp, a pine-apple," we are understood to mean that we perceive them by the organ of sight; and, if we wish to indicate perception by any other organ of sense, it is necessary to mention the quality by which that organ is affected, thus—"I perceive the smell of a rose,"—"I perceive the sound of a harp"—"I perceive the taste of a pine-apple."

Since, then, it is by the eye that we perceive all those complex things which most interest us, a man, a tree, a house, an army, a forest, a city, it is easy to understand how so many more, and so much more complex, emotions of sublimity and beauty have become associated with visible qualities than with any other kind of sensible qualities. It is undoubtedly true, however, that the qualities perceived by the other senses are capable of combining with emotions, (musical sounds do so in a most uncommon degree,) and although it was a received doctrine before the days of Plato, that the eye and the ear are the only channels through which external objects affect the mind with beauty, ἐλέγετο γὰρ, he

makes Socrates say, ὡς ἐγω μνημῆς ἔχω, τοῦτ εἶναι καλὸν τὸ ἥδυ οὐ παν, ἀλλ' ὃ ἄν δι' ὀψεῶς καὶ ἄκοης ᾖ, yet this doctrine is not true in its utmost rigour.

Mr. Burke argues that bitter tastes are sublime, because such expressions as "a cup of bitterness"—"to drain the bitter cup of fortune," "the bitter apples of Sodom," are suitable to a sublime description; and I think the force of his argument must be admitted, though my own personal experience of bitter tastes would not have led me to invent such metaphors.

The same author quotes two passages from Virgil, which he thinks prove the sublimity of smells.

> "At Rex sollicitus monstris oracula Fauni
> Fatidici genitoris adit, lucosque sub altâ
> Consulit Albuneâ, nemorum quæ maxima sacro
> Fonte sonat sœvumque exhalat opaca Mephitim."

> "Spelunca alta fuit vastoque immanis hiatu
> Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro, nemorumque tenebris
> Quam super haud ullæ poterant impune volantes
> Tendere iter pennis: talis sese halitus atris
> Faucibus effundens supera ad convexa ferebat."

I acknowledge the sublime effect of these passages, but to me it seems quite clear that it is not sublimity excited by any smell, or the image of any smell. I acknowledge Mephitis to be sublime, but I am utterly ignorant, and so, I believe, are most of my readers, of the smell of Mephitis: if I chanced to inhale it I should

not recognise it as Mephitis, consequently there can be no feeling of any sort, whether sublime or not, associated in my mind with that smell; and the same may be said of that 'halitus' which is so powerfully described in the second quotation.

For my own part, I recollect no smell that excites in my mind the emotion of sublimity except that peculiar one which is characteristic of the ocean. Observe the very striking effect which Homer produces by describing the amphibious herds of Proteus in the Odyssey, as

Πικρὸν ἀποπνείουσαι ἁλὸς πολυβενθέος ὀδμήν.

This line does not, like those from Virgil, describe the effects of an unknown odour, but powerfully recalls to our imagination one which can hardly be forgotten by those who have had experience of it, and by so doing, throws a marine character over the whole scene, more rapidly and vividly than could have been done even by an image of some visible thing.

Adam Smith has remarked that there is a sixth sense generally confounded with that of touch, but really very distinct from it. By this sense we do not acquire the notion of resistance or externality, but perceive such qualities as heat and cold. The quality of heat, from being the sign of animal life, at least that sort of animal life with which we are most familiar, and the quality of cold from being the sign of its negation, are capable of exciting the emotions of sublimi-

ty and beauty. The expression *δάκρυα θέρμα* is very beautiful, indicating, as it does, the living and sentient source from which the fountain of sorrow springs. Homer has been lavish in his descriptions of wounds, but I think the two that strike me as most terrible are those by which Echeclus is slain in the 20th Iliad, and Pedæus in the 5th.

ὁ δ' Ἀγήνορος υἱὸν Ἔχεκλον
Μέσσην κακκεφαλὴν ξίφει ἤλασε κωπήεντι.
Πᾶν δ' ὑπεθερμάνθη ξίφος αἵματι.

Τὸν μὲν Φυλείδης δουρικλυτὸς, ἐγγύθεν ἐλθὼν,
Βεβλήκει κεφαλῆς κατὰ ἰνίον ὀξέϊ δουρί.
Ἀντικρὺ δ' ἀν' ὀδόντας ὑπὸ γλῶσσαν τάμε χαλκός,
Ἤριπε δ' ἐν κονίῃ, ψυχρὸν δ' ἔλε χαλκὸν ὀδοῦσιν.

No one will deny, I believe, that the fearful energy of these passages would have been much weakened if the scalding of the sword and the coldness of the spear-head had been omitted.

I remarked, in speaking of the primary sources of the sublime and beautiful, viz. human feelings and passions, that the negation of them is also a source of the sublime and beautiful to those who know by experience what those feelings and passions are, and I illustrated the remark by the description which Lucretius gives of the moral condition of the gods according to the system of Epicurus. The same remark is equally applicable to those secondary sources of the sublime and beautiful, which I have been now examining, and the same poet, describing the physical con-

dition of the gods, will again furnish an equally apt example :

> " Apparet divom numen, sedesque quietæ
> Quas neque concutiunt venti, neque nubila nimbis
> Aspergunt, neque nix acri concreta pruinâ
> Cana cadens violat."

The extraordinary pre-eminence which visible objects unquestionably possess over all other objects of sense in exciting the emotions of Sublimity and Beauty, very naturally gave rise to the opinion that Sublimity and Beauty, or a considerable portion of them at least, are the mere organic effects of external objects upon the eye ; and, before Bishop Berkeley had taught mankind how much of what they think they see is *really* seen with their eyes, and how much of it is to be attributed to the co-operation of their hands and their imagination, it was not so easy as it now is to show that such an opinion is utterly groundless.

If any part of the sublimity and beauty attributed to external objects, be really the organic effect of those objects on the eye, by abstracting all that we have learnt concerning them by other means, we shall divest this sublimity and beauty of all adventitious circumstances, and apprehend those powerful charms which communicate such a fascinating influence to the combinations into which they enter, in all their native purity. But the result of this operation, since that admirable analysis which has taught us to distinguish be-

tween the original and the acquired perceptions of sight, is a few spots of colour, having no connexion with external objects, and therefore significant of nothing, and it does seem quite evident that if these spots of colour never became significant of any thing, the eyes of all human beings would behold them with the same glassy indifference as the eye of an infant by whom their significance has not been discovered. It is not worth while, however, with reference to the subject of this essay, to dispute that unmeaning spots of colour may afford some trifling organic pleasure. The question is, can that organic pleasure, if any there be, take its place in a logical classification, as a species of the sublime or beautiful?—or, to state the question in particular, can the pleasure of perceiving a blueish speck be properly called by the same general name as the emotion with which we contemplate the immense and magnificent ocean, from which our adventurous race receives such splendid rewards and such tremendous afflictions?

It is true that the late Mr. Stewart, in his ingenious Essay on the Beautiful, seems to consider this question as quite unimportant, for, after having censured some speculations of Diderot, he observes, that they "have evidently originated in a prejudice which has descended to modern times from the scholastic ages, that when a word admits of a variety of significations, these different significations must be all species of the same

genus, and must consequently include some essential idea common to every individual to which the general term can be applied:" and then he cites the following passage, where, as he says, "this prejudice is assumed as an indisputable maxim:"—"Beau est un terme que nous appliquons à une infinité d'êtres. Mais, quelque différence qu'il y ait entre ces êtres, il faut ou que nous fassions une fausse application du terme beau, ou qu'il y ait dans tous ces êtres une qualité dont le terme beau soit le signe." Notwithstanding Mr. Stewart's high authority, I must continue to receive what is here laid down as an indisputable maxim. If, indeed, Diderot had stated the latter branch of his alternative as a distinct assertion, it would have been open to objection, but it seems to me that whoever denies the alternative which he has stated attacks the whole doctrine of classification, and shakes, as far as in him lies, the superstructure of logic which rests upon no other foundation.

If, then, I were convinced that the terms sublimity and beauty, or either of them, had been applied to the mere organic effect of visible objects, I should have no hesitation in saying that a false application of the terms had been made, and consequently that in philosophical language that signification of them ought to be rejected. But the truth is, that no such application of the terms is ever made in popular language. Those

who invented languages never instituted any comparison between the simple organic effect of mere colour and the complicated effect of colours when they have become the signs of external things. No man thinks, when he is standing on the sea shore, of the blueish speck, which is all that he sees—the real object of vision is unknown to the vulgar, and forgotten by the philosopher unless in the act of philosophising. We may be quite sure that no epithet was ever given in popular language to the mere organic pleasure of vision, since it is only by a most refined analysis that we have discovered what the real object is. The experience of this object which we had in our infancy, has been totally obliterated from the memory, and the connexion which has been formed between it and the objects of touch exhibits the strongest instance of association with which the study of mind makes us acquainted. Men not only suppose they see what they really do not see, but also frequently suppose they do not see that which they really do. The sides of solid rectangles when seen in perspective are seen as trapeziums, but a man who knows nothing of perspective supposes that he sees rectangles. The legs of a chair standing on the floor are seen to be of unequal length, but such a man thinks he sees four legs of equal length. Desire him to copy these objects on paper, he produces a rectangle and four equal legs. He knows,

indeed, when he has drawn them that the representation is incorrect, but he does not know in what respect it is incorrect, and even though you tell him that his error consists in copying what he believes to exist instead of what he sees, still he cannot correct his drawing, for in truth he is ignorant what it is he sees.

The analysis by which the original perceptions of sight are distinguished from those which are acquired, proves sufficiently that sublimity and beauty are not the organic effects of visible objects; and although it does not prove that they are the effect of the association of visible objects with emotions and passions, yet it removes entirely the great difficulty which stands in the way of that conclusion, and which causes the arguments in favour of it to be received at first with distrust. The difficulty I speak of arises from the rapidity and certainty with which the emotions of sublimity and beauty follow upon the perception of visible objects, whence has sprung the opinion that they are visible qualities. But if we have decisive proof that men suppose they see things which are not visible, even so as to substitute those invisible things for what they really do see, the conclusion that sublimity and beauty (though men think they perceive them by the eye) are qualities of mental feelings can no longer be of such a startling nature as to create a prejudice against the arguments by which it is established.

I have said that it is not worth while to dispute, with reference to the subject of this Essay, whether there are or are not any organic pleasures of the eye; but when we consider how frequently and how vehemently our feelings and passions are affected through that organ, it is certainly curious to observe how totally unfit the objects which affect it, that is, mere colours, are to produce any such effects independently of association. We cannot indeed prove this by a perfectly accurate experiment, because we cannot strip colour entirely of all associations, but we may approximate nearly to that point. Father Castel, a Frenchman, proceeding upon the supposed analogy between the prismatic colours and the notes of the diatonic scale, constructed an instrument which was to exhibit tunes to the eye, hoping to stir the spirits of his spectators through that organ, as the musician stirs those of his audience through the ear. But inasmuch as the materials he combined were signs of nothing, the combination itself was a sign of nothing but the misdirected ingenuity of the inventor, and the attempt failed entirely, as might have been predicted by any one conversant with the theory applicable to it. It is indeed possible to exhibit rhythm to the eye, as is done in dancing; but the mind judges very imperfectly of rhythm exhibited to that organ, therefore the rhythm of dancing is almost imperceptible, unless it is marked by the

accompaniment of music. The case must have been the same with the rhythm of Father Castel's visible tunes.

I observed in the beginning of this Essay that I do not entirely agree with Mr. Alison, and the author of the article "Beauty," in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica; and I shall conclude by indicating the particulars, in which I venture to differ from such eminent authorities.

Mr. Alison makes sublimity and beauty to consist in such trains of ideas of emotion, as possess a predominant character of cheerfulness or melancholy; for example:—whereas to me it appears that such trains, in respect of sublimity and beauty, differ only in degree from the ideas which compose them, and I should say that their sublimity and beauty depend upon their being trains, only in the same sense in which I should say that the value of a string of pearls depends upon its being a string. In my opinion each idea in such a train is sublime or beautiful, though less so than the whole train, as every pearl is valuable, though less so than the whole string.

Mr. Alison denies, indeed, sublimity and beauty to objects of sense; but he seems to deny them equally to mental emotions, unless they happen to form part of a train. In his opinion

the feeling which possessed the mind of Regulus, when he is said,

> " ——— pudicæ conjugis osculum,
> Parvosque natos, ut capitis minor,
> Ab se removisse et virilem
> Torvus humi posuisse vultum,"

considered by itself, and apart from all associations, has no more title to be called sublime, than the countenance and gesture by which that feeling was manifested.

To such an opinion I cannot subscribe, and I think that some indistinctness has arisen from its introduction into the very eloquent and ingenious work which has thrown so much light on this subject.

The author of the article " Beauty" agrees with Mr. Alison in denying sublimity and beauty to sensible objects; and also, it seems, in denying them to mental affections, considered in themselves. But he does not, like Mr. Alison, place them in trains of ideas of a peculiar sort. According to this author, sublimity and beauty are the shadows or images of mental affections, reflected from objects of sense. Thus the affection of a woman for her husband is not beautiful in itself, but it is beautiful when suggested to the mind by the ivy clinging round an oak. In other cases, beauty is reflected pity, reflected

resignation, reflected grief, &c. The beauty in all these cases differs from that feeling of which it is the reflection, as the light of the moon differs from that of the sun; and it would be as improper to call any of those feelings beautiful, as it would be to call the solar beams chaste, cold, and silvery.

This acute writer does, indeed, speak, in the early part of his Essay, of the beauty of things intellectual, and totally segregated from matter, but I am not able to reconcile these expressions with that part of his doctrine of which I have just given a very concise and perhaps imperfect account, and which appears to me not to have been originally an essential element of his theory, but to have suggested itself as an answer to the objections which he anticipated.

It is to be observed that the theory of the last-mentioned author, assuming it to give a perfectly accurate account of the facts, does not amount to any explanation of them.

If a certain wine is found to be noxious, and a chemist shows by analysis that it contains sugar of lead, which was before known to be noxious, he is properly said to explain the fact that the wine is noxious. He thereby reduces what appeared to be two facts to one. But when a chemist shows that common salt is a combination of soda and muriatic acid, neither of which have any saline qualities, though he proves a very

important and curious fact, he gives no explanation—he does not reduce two facts to one.

The doctrine that Sublimity and Beauty are qualities of Mental Emotions, and that Mental Emotions become in various ways most intimately connected with Sensible Objects, is strictly an explanation of the fact that Sublimity and Beauty frequently appear to be qualities of Sensible Objects.

THE BRITISH CODE OF DUEL:

A REFERENCE TO THE

LAWS OF HONOUR,

AND THE

CHARACTER OF GENTLEMAN.

THE BRITISH CODE OF DUEL, &c.

If a law-giver were to decree that whenever a theft was committed, and a complaint made to the proper authority, the robber and the party robbed should draw lots, and that he who drew the shortest should be hanged, the means would not appear very happily adapted to the end of repressing theft. Yet the principle of this method of decision is the very one on which the ancient trial by battle, long considered a very admirable institution, must in reality have depended, and on which the modern duel, still considered a very admirable institution, must actually depend. The above method, however, of repressing theft has this advantage over the battle and the duel, that it is governed purely by

chance, which in one particular at least resembles justice, viz. in being blind, that is in having no pre-conceived bias towards either of the litigant parties, whereas the two latter institutions depend, in a great measure, upon skill, which goes a great way towards securing success to him who happens to possess it. But although this principle of chance was that which in reality determined the result in the battle and the duel, excepting in so far as the equity of its decisions was disturbed by the unequal skill of the parties, yet we must do our ancestors the justice to remark, that they erected the institution upon a foundation, the solidity of which was never suspected in their days, and which, if solid, would not only justify the institution, but would show that no other method of deciding disputes between man and man ought ever to have been adopted.

Our ancestors thought, and the opinion seems to be very universal and natural, an *idolon tribus*, according to Lord Bacon's classification, that those apparently irregular phenomena, which an ample and scientific experience has now shown to be only particular cases of invariable laws, were the effects of particular interpositions of the Deity; and that as the Deity must love virtue, and hate vice, he would on every occasion take care to adapt the succession of physical events according to the moral exigencies of the case.

This was unquestionably the original ground on which men believed that knotty questions of fact might be conveniently cut by the sword, instead of being slowly and painfully solved by the ordinary operations of judicature. This ground, however, has slipped away from under our feet, and if the practice of duelling is to stand at all, some other must be found on which it may be rested.

Accordingly we no longer hear, among those who profess to reason on the subject, of washing out the imputation of dishonour in the blood of the slanderer, but we are told that the reciprocal right to challenge and the liability to be challenged, are the sufficient reason of all the polish and decorum which are to be found in our manners. We remember to have read at school that

> "—— Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
> Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros:"

but at the time we no more suspected than the benighted heathen who wrote the lines, that to snuff a candle at twelve paces was one of those ingenuous arts to which such good effects are to be attributed; and even now, after all our experience of the world, we feel ourselves compelled to dissent from that opinion, and we propose to lay before our readers the reasons of our dissent.

We consider the question as now ripe for discussion: as long as we are told that the honour of a gentleman is in his own keeping, and can only be vindicated by his own right hand, &c. &c. our inability to apprehend the sense of the propositions prevents us from grappling with them. But when we hear of means and an end, we begin to scent our quarry; means and an end are the very things we delight in.

Refinement of manners, then, being the end, the question is, whether the custom of duelling be the best means of attaining it.

The circumstance that most forcibly strikes us at first sight, in considering this custom, is, that it is not an artificial device, by which the natural disposition of men is to be moulded to beneficial purposes, but, *pro tanto*, a recourse to a savage state, it looks like a rude and desert spot in the very midst of the garden of civilization, where

> "Inter nitentia culta
> Infelix lolium, et steriles dominantur avenæ."

It involves a confession that there are certain injuries for which the wisdom of civilized men is incapable of finding an adequate remedy, and which must, therefore, be left to the operation of those vindictive feelings which nature has implanted in the hearts of the human race. All

that has been done by design and reflection has been, to impose a check, to hang a weight upon the springs, whose elasticity puts the system in action. For there is no doubt but that the savage man would maim or slay whomsoever should affront him, without thinking it necessary to expose himself to the hazard of the same calamities; whereas, under the system of duelling, no man is entitled to what is called satisfaction, without tendering the same satisfaction (which we believe, however, is not then called by the same name) to his adversary. It cannot fairly be denied that this is a check, and a very powerful one, but of what nature? The framers of the mutiny act have determined, that if a plaintiff bring an action for any thing done under the authority of that act, and fail to recover, he shall pay treble costs to the defendant. The object of this is, of course, to separate those cases, where the plaintiff has a just cause of complaint, from those in which he has not; to leave him at liberty to pursue his course with regard to the first set of cases, and to deter him from pursuing it, with regard to the second set. But, suppose the provision had been, that the plaintiff should be exposed to an even chance of paying treble the costs to the defendant, whether he made out his case or not, it is manifest that such an indiscriminate restriction could only be defended on the

ground that the right to sue generally produced more evil than good, and consequently that an absolute prohibition would be still better than a partial restriction. So it is with the check upon the privilege of shooting at men; let the insult be never so grievous and severe and public, he who receives it shall have no chance of punishing the offender unless he submits himself to the same chance of punishment. We who think it inexpedient that men should be allowed to fire with ball at those who have hurt their feelings, of course approve of the check, and only find fault with it, because it is not powerful enough to extinguish the practice altogether; but it is perfectly obvious, that whoever does approve of the check, cannot also approve of that which is to be checked, indiscriminately checked, be it observed, not checked in its worst part and unchecked in its best. Yet obvious as it is, we doubt whether among the admirers of the duel, any one can be found so daringly consistent, as to defend the unrestrained privilege of maiming and murdering. The cause of this inconsistency is not difficult to discover; the restricted privilege is veiled by the prejudice belonging to whatever has been long established, the unrestricted privilege has no such misty disguise to conceal its natural enormity. It should, of course, be borne in mind, that our arguments have reference to

the principles on which the duel is now supported, not to those on which it was originally instituted.

But now let us examine upon what pretence it is, that we in the nineteenth century are driven back, as far as regards the subject of insults, to the savage state, and are obliged to allow every man to protect himself with his own hand. It happens, unfortunately, that there is not extant any systematic defence of the duel. The surface of the subject has been skimmed and grazed by the writers in the periodical papers, but nothing like analysis, so far as we have seen, has ever been applied to it: all that can be done, therefore, is to furnish an answer to such desultory arguments as we have met with in the above-mentioned works or in conversation, and to such as have suggested themselves, as in any degree plausible to our own minds.

It is said, in the first place, that insults ought to be repressed, and that the institution, or custom rather, of duelling, is a method, and the only method, of repressing them.

The advocates for duelling seem to admit, that if insults could be subjected to the same course of adjudication as other crimes* are sub-

* We have considered an insult as a species of crime, which though not consonant to common phraseology, is perfectly consistent with logical precision, for that an insult is an action productive of evil, and, as such ought to be repressed, is a pro-

jected to, the extraordinary and anomalous method of punishing them by duel would be superfluous; and indeed it is too clear to admit of dispute, that if an insult could be punished as a forgery is punished, there could be no reason why an insult should also be punished by duel, which would not also prove that a forgery ought to be so punished.

If, then, it can be shown, that all the arguments which tend to prove that an insult is an improper subject for ordinary criminal jurisprudence, tend to prove, *a fortiori*, that it is an improper subject for a duel, it should seem that a complete answer is given to all such arguments.

Now, the reason usually given why an insult is an improper subject for criminal procedure is this—an insult, it is said, is, in a great measure, incapable of definition and of proof; which circumstances would make it so difficult for the tribunal to which the question is referred to determine, whether any insult has been offered, and if any, of what degree, that its decisions would, by their absurdity and iniquity, produce more mischief than they would remedy.

Now, these reasons, we say, apply *a fortiori* against the system of duelling; for by that system the determination of the question, has any insult been offered, and if any, of what degree, is in-

position that will be admitted as well by the defenders as the impugners of duelling.

deed taken away from the cognizance of the tribunal said to be incompetent to determine it, but for the purpose of referring it to the person whom all mankind, from the first dawn of legislation, have declared it to be the most unfit to decide it, namely, the person who asserts himself to be insulted.

Why is it that, when a robbery is supposed to have been committed, we do not allow the accuser to pronounce the guilt of the accused? Because he being the most interested in the question, is of all men the most unfit to decide it, even though, as in this case of a robbery, it should be a fact about which no mistake is likely to exist in the mind of the party; much more, then, is a man incompetent to decide whether he has been so insulted as to justify him in challenging the party accused, because an insult is incomparably less definite in its nature than a robbery, and because the judgment of the accuser is inevitably disturbed by the irritation of his feelings on the one hand, and by the apprehension of the danger to which he must expose himself on the other.

It is then quite idle and beside the purpose to insist that, if insults were subjected to criminal procedure, the innocent would so often be punished, the guilty would so often escape, or be punished too much or too little, that it is better to leave these actions unrepressed than to endea-

vour to repress them in this way; it is quite idle, we say, thus to insist, unless the advocate for the duel were prepared further to show, what no one has ever attempted, that by means of duelling, fewer innocent persons would be punished, fewer guilty persons would escape, or be punished too much or too little.

In our experience we have generally remarked, that when the controversy has reached this point, the ground is shifted, and (it being impossible to deny the defects of the duelling system) it is said, that, with all its defects, it still is better to submit to it, than to suffer insults to go unpunished.

What is this but to run upon the other horn of the dilemma?

The dilemma, when stated in form, is this: if duelling produces a balance of evil, it ought to be abolished; if duelling produces a balance of good, criminal procedure, as has been shown, would produce a still greater balance of good; therefore still duelling ought to be abolished. This is the dilemma, and we should like to see in what way perverted ingenuity can escape from it.

Moreover, besides those arguments which apply in a stronger degree to the extraordinary, and in a weaker degree to the ordinary method of punishment, there are some which apply in the strongest degree to the extraordinary, and

to the ordinary not at all. These reasons are drawn from the nature of the punishment.

It is very obvious, that, supposing the abstract offence to be once defined, and the particular offence to be once proved, it is not difficult so to manage matters in a court of justice, as that the punishment shall fall upon the offender, and not upon some other person, and shall fall upon him with a degree of severity proportioned to the nature of the offence. Whereas in the system of duelling, when the existence of a *corpus delicti* has been established by the verdict of the temperate and impartial tribunal above-mentioned, viz. the accuser himself, we are not much nearer the object in view, that is, the adequate punishment of the offender, than before. No doubt, to those who admire the constitution of the tribunal, the manner in which the punishment is adapted to the offence, must be a new and very copious source of admiration: to others it may, perhaps, seem that a punishment varying from zero through all the gradations of personal injury up to death, not, be it observed, according to the nature of the crime, but according to extraneous circumstances which bear not the remotest relation thereto, and falling, in at least one out of two cases, not upon the criminal, but the party aggrieved, is no very happy effort of human wisdom.

To be serious, is it not manifest that if a de-

scription of this institution were to be found in a grave work on jurisprudence, it could only escape from contempt, by exciting the indignation of the reader? Yet this compound of absurdity, iniquity, and atrocity, by favour of such sounding names as honour and chivalry, passes with those who will not analyze their opinions, for one of the bulwarks of civilized society.

From what has been said, we hope it sufficiently appears that if any balance of good above evil is produced by duelling, that very circumstance proves irresistibly that a still greater balance must needs be produced by punishment in the ordinary course of criminal jurisprudence, so that there can be no necessity for having recourse to this anomalous mode of retribution. But we think it will not be difficult to show that no balance of good, but, on the contrary, a balance of evil, is produced by duelling, and, consequently, that it ought to be abolished, even though no other means could be devised for putting a stop to the actions which it professes to repress.

In estimating the evil effects of duelling, one important consideration is commonly left entirely out of the account, namely, the tendency which it has to aggravate the very evils it is intended to repress: for the quantity of pain which one man can inflict upon another by an insult where duelling is not permitted, is in reality very

minute compared with the quantity of pain which one man can inflict upon another by an insult where duelling is established. Let any one calmly consider the misery a man may be subjected to by any given insult (by being called a liar, for example) taken by itself, and then let him contrast it with that which a man may be made to undergo by the same insult aggravated by the consequences which are attached to it by the system of duelling. To any man the consequence may be death, to the man who conscientiously shrinks from the wanton shedding of human blood, the intolerable burthen of ignominy or of remorse. The man who is constitutionally timid, the weakness of whose individual character most especially requires the protection of the public, is delivered up a prey to his oppressor; while the man of ferocious courage, and skill at his weapon, is invested with a power over the destinies of his fellow-creatures, similar to that which the man of physical strength enjoys in a savage life, and which none could enjoy in civilized life if the custom of duelling did not prevail.

The result of this comparison may be made still more plainly apparent, by instituting it in a specific case, of which actual experience may be had in the present state of society.

Contrast, we say to the admirer of the duel, contrast the pain of receiving an insult from a

clergyman with the pain of receiving one from a military officer. In the former case, you need not challenge the wrong doer, and if you do, he need not fight: in the latter case, you must challenge the wrong doer, and he must fight,—so says the code of honour. In the first case, then, you have the evil alone, in the second, the evil with its remedy—which is the worst?

Here, again, we are come to a dilemma; for though it be perfectly clear what reply a candid and reasonable man must give to our question, yet, for the purposes of the argument, it matters not in the least which way it is answered. If you say the evil alone is worse than the evil together with its remedy, then you cannot also say that a duel is such an object of terror that men are thereby deterred from insulting their fellows, and you give up the only ground on which the defence of duelling rests. If you say the evil together with its remedy is worse than the evil alone, you admit the conclusion we are now contending for, namely, that duelling aggravates the very evils it is intended to repress.

To avoid the possibility of mistake, we wish it to be understood that we do not mean to deny, that by the custom of duelling a certain motive is presented to abstain from insult, which, but for that custom, would not exist: what we have been endeavouring to show is, that, on the other

hand, the evil of being insulted is multiplied manifold; whence it follows, that the motives to inflict insult are also multiplied.

This inference, if it be not already perfectly evident, may be made so by the following illustration:—

It is not uncommon to hear the unnecessary trouble and expense of law proceedings defended on the ground that they have a tendency to discourage vexatious litigation, and certainly they do present one motive to abstain from vexatious litigation which would not otherwise exist. But, on the other hand, they enormously increase the motives which stimulate to such litigation, for if the trouble and expense of a law-suit were nothing, the motives to inflict a vexatious law-suit would be nothing: as you increase the one, you necessarily increase the other. In like manner, if the pain of being insulted were nothing, the motives to inflict insult would be nothing, and as you increase the one you necessarily increase the other.

But, further, though it has been admitted that the fear of a challenge does operate as a restraining motive, it can be proved that it only does so by disturbing the effect of a much more constant, efficacious, and innocuous motive. For there is in civilized society a force which, when undisturbed by prejudices, is fully competent to produce, in the greatest degree, that ob-

ject which the duel is vainly intended to produce; to which force also, be it observed, the duel owes all the efficacy which it can be supposed to possess; we mean, of course, the force of public opinion. It is the terror of general disapprobation which really creates whatever of refinement is to be found in our manners, not the terror of wounds or death, for these the offender can avoid if he pleases, but he can only avoid them by encountering the more dreadful punishment of ignominy, which few indeed can bring themselves to endure. Can it be doubted, that if the punishment of ignominy fell at once upon the man who offers an insult, (as, but for the practice of duelling, it most assuredly would fall,) its efficacy would be far greater in repressing insults, than when it falls only (as it does under the duelling system) upon him who offers an insult, and refuses to give satisfaction if required, and upon him who receives an insult and fails to demand satisfaction. All the instances in which rudeness is now restrained by the fear of a duel are so many proofs of the omnipotence of public opinion; for what else compels a man to the alternative of curbing his insolence, or exposing his life?

It may make this matter clearer to consider a hypothetical case.

Suppose, then, two nations having both reached such a degree of refinement, that the behaviour

of a man who should call another liar would be generally considered very offensive. Suppose, further, that the custom of duelling did not exist in the one, and did exist in the other. If a man felt that he could endure ignominy, he might give the lie without restraint in either society. But if, which is the far more common case, he felt that he could not endure ignominy, then in the first society he must of necessity abstain from giving the lie, for there is nothing in such a society which can prevent the public disapprobation from falling upon him if he does not abstain, just as it falls in the actual state of society in England, upon all those whose offences are not punishable by duel. But in the second society, the man who does not encounter ignominy may, nevertheless, gratify the brutal insolence of his disposition, provided he dares to encounter personal danger; he has even a great chance of escaping both ignominy and danger, if he choose well the object of his attack. Therefore, as the efficacy of punishment is, *cæteris paribus*, in proportion to its certainty, it seems impossible to escape from the conclusion, that there would be fewer instances of the lie given in the first society than in the last. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how the character of a bully, in all its shades and degrees, would be an object of ambition to any one, in a country where the law is too strong to suffer actual assaults to be com-

mitted with impunity, where public opinion is powerful, and duelling not permitted; but, where duelling is in full vigour, it is very easy to understand that the bully may not only enjoy the delight of vulgar applause, but the advantages of real power.

This view of the subject appears to us to exhibit so distinctly, that the efficacy of duelling (abstracting from the mischiefs it produces directly) is nothing more than the weakened and diverted efficacy of public opinion, that at the risk of being tedious we shall repeat the argument over again in a general form, thus :—

If a man fears not the disapprobation of the society in which he lives, the custom of duelling cannot prevent him from insulting whomsoever he pleases, for there is no process, save the public censure, by which he can be compelled to fight.

If a man does fear the disapprobation of the society in which he lives, he would be more effectually restrained from insulting others if that disapprobation were the direct and inevitable consequence of such a proceeding, than when it is only the remote and uncertain consequence.

The disapprobation of the society is only the remote and uncertain consequence of offering an insult under the system of duelling, for the offender may at his pleasure commute it into per-

sonal danger, and has some chance of escaping it without any commutation, and even throwing it upon the injured party.

If the system of duelling did not exist, the disapprobation of the society would be the direct and inevitable consequence of offering an insult; for it is necessarily admitted by our opponents, that an insult is a hurtful action, and we see that upon all those hurtful actions to which the duel is not applied, the disapprobation of the society does fall with undivided force; it falls too even upon those hurtful actions to which the duel is in general applied, when they are performed by a class of persons privileged from challenge. Thus, if a churchman is guilty of a gross insult, the weight of the public censure falls with undivided force upon him, his character suffers severely, and by the frequent repetition of such conduct would be utterly destroyed—while that of the injured party is held in the same estimation as it was before the affront. It seems impossible to assign any reason why the same punishment should not fall upon every one who offends in the same way, if the public censure were not diverted from its proper object by the institution of the duel.

Let us imagine that a Chinese, who had been some time resident in this country, were thus to address an Englishman :—

" I have not failed to remark, since I came to England, that many gross actions and expressions, which in my own country are common among all ranks, are here confined to the lowest orders, and I am informed that any person belonging to the superior classes of society, who should so far forget his good breeding as to be guilty of such actions or expressions, would immediately forfeit his right to be admitted into the company of his equals. Yet I was present some time ago at a party, where, in the heat of a dispute, one person gave another very plainly to understand, that he doubted the truth of an assertion which the latter had made. I could perceive by the altered countenance of the person so addressed, that a great breach of good manners had been committed, and indeed the cheerfulness of the whole company was in a great measure subdued; and notwithstanding the efforts made by the master of the house, was never effectually revived during the evening. Yet to my great astonishment, I have since found that the culprit is received in the same houses, and treated with the same respect as before. This anomaly has puzzled me extremely, and I should be much obliged to you to explain it to me."

The difficulty of the Chinese would, as it appears to us, be most natural and reasonable, the

Englishman would, indeed, be able to explain it by unfolding to him the system of duelling and its consequences,—that is, by pointing out to him that the disapprobation which would naturally have fallen upon the offender, was diverted by this institution, and discharged upon the person who had failed to resent and to avenge the affront; in no other way would it be possible to account for so extravagant an aberration of public censure.

It has been said for duelling, as it has been said for prize-fighting, and as it might be said, with equal force, for every other violation of good order, that if you close up this vent for the angry passions of mankind, another will soon be forced open, and that instead of duels you will have assassinations. To refute this supposition, an appeal may be confidently made to actual experience. The two great nations of antiquity were unacquainted with this boasted institution, yet their history furnishes no ground whatever for supposing that they were addicted to the practice of private assassination. The duellist, however, will object to these examples as inadmissible for the purpose; for the Greeks and Romans, he will say, were such coarse and vulgar fellows, so insensible to the point of honour, that they suffered themselves to be called rogue, thief, and liar, without ever showing, or even feeling, the resentment which be-

comes a gentleman; but we must not thence infer, that in these more enlightened and refined times, when honour is dearer than life, and must not be sullied even by the breath of suspicion, that the higher orders of society will consent to forego the privilege of mutual slaughter in some shape or other. To such a reasoner we hesitate not to reply, that if these ferocious and vindictive passions which can only be slaked in human blood,—which can only be restrained from using the knife of the assassin, by being indulged with the pistol of the duellist;—if these passions, we say, are to be considered as the characteristics of an enlightened and refined state of society, it becomes the duty of every friend to morality and good order, to pray for the return of darkness and barbarism.

There is not, however, any necessity to refer to the history of remote times in order to prove this point, for there is actually existing before our eyes a body of men to whose irascible passions the safety valve of the duel has never been applied, who yet have never been accused of a propensity to assassination; and as this body of men is distinguished from the rest of the upper classes, rather by a greater than by a less degree of politeness, it furnishes at the same time a practical proof of the proposition which we have already demonstrated in another way,—namely, the proposition that duelling tends rather to retard than

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to advance the refinement of manners. The body we speak of is, of course, the clergy of England as they now exist: whatever faults may have been laid to their charge, certainly neither a predilection for murder, nor a want of exterior propriety, is among the number. Now how does this happen? What possible reason can be assigned, why a churchman should not give vent to angry and contemptuous feelings, by angry and contemptuous gestures and expressions, as frequently as a layman? a man in holy orders is still a man; he does not change his nature with the colour of his coat; nor is there any ground for supposing that young gentlemen are moved to become candidates for ordination, because they feel that the acrid and caustic ingredients of human nature are wanting in their idiosyncrasy: on the contrary, it will not be disputed that people go into the church, as into any other profession, because they suppose that they have a fair prospect of advancing their fortunes in that direction. To us the reason is manifest. If a priest indulge in abusive epithets, or otherwise conduct himself offensively, he gains nothing but the momentary gratification of passion, with the certainty of a most severe retribution. Whereas a layman in the same circumstances not only assuages his wrath, but acquires, moreover, the reputation of a certain reckless gallantry, which

varnishes over and conceals from observation and from censure, the insolence and brutality of his conduct. It is of no avail to say, that society requires a more strict observation of decorum in the ministers of religion than in the rest of the community; for the question is not how much society requires, but how it can enforce what it does require. And if, when the effect of its censures is not impeded by the duel, it can enforce the greater degree of propriety, it seems no strained inference to conclude, that if the same advantage was afforded by the universal suppression of duelling, it would be able to enforce, by the same means, that less degree of propriety which is expected from the rest of the upper classes.

These are the reasons which have appeared to us conclusive of the question, so conclusive indeed, so much stronger than the imbecility of the subject seems to demand, that we have several times doubted, in the course of the discussion, whether we were not wasting efforts which ought rather to be directed against more plausible errors. But it is to be remembered, that however poorly the custom we are attacking may be fortified with reasons, it is fenced round on every side with a triple row of prejudices. And this must be our excuse to our readers (for we feel that some excuse may be expected) for

having crushed with the force of argument a system, which when exposed to the light, crumbles into dust by the spontaneous operation of its own rottenness.

THE END.

LONDON:
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

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Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Dec. 2004

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